

From: Andy Vander Meulen
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 12:45pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am 69 years old. I am the second of ten children from Dutch immigrant parents. I was born in California and moved to Washington state when I was 16 years old. My Dad and family were in the dairy business and I dropped out of high school to help my Dad on the farm he purchased at Sumas, WA. I served my country in the Korean conflict and went into the dairy business after I was discharged from the service. I evolved into milk marketing and it has been my occupation for 30 years. I had a good understanding of milk pricing numbers but was afraid of computers. In 1984 I lost my job with the cooperative and cheese plant operation I had put together and had to start all over again. I took a class at Skagit Valley College to learn to operate a computer.

I started a new producer cooperative and began marketing their milk. I was able to learn to do pricing and spreadsheets using Microsoft's "Works" program and I still use it today. I run this small producer cooperative from my office in my home and we have our operating costs the lowest in our area. Microsoft products are the most reasonably priced products on the market. I have made a good living for my family and I say Microsoft made that possible by lowering the cost of software and the products that are available to us consumers. My computer and my Microsoft software are the cheapest investment I have in my business and what I'm able to do with it.

We say we are a nation of "rule of law". It appears to me that we are becoming a nation of "abused by law". We had a corrupt administration who catered to the cry-baby competitors of Microsoft and a bunch of money grubbing attorney generals who are just after the money like they did in the tobacco debacle. It is time to end all this lawyer waste of time and money and let competition determine the winners and losers. Microsoft should be applauded, not persecuted for what they have made available to us average American consumers.

In closing I would suggest the DOJ keep an eye on AOL. I can't hardly watch anything on my satellite dish but it's AOL Time Warner. If they have their way, they will control our TV, movies, music, internet, software, and computer operating systems.

Microsoft used their elbows to defend their business against a group(including AOL) who sat down together and said "Let's slay the dragon at Redmond". I say they were guilty of collusion.

I believe the settlement with Microsoft by the DOJ and nine of the states is fair to Microsoft, and we the consumers. I would ask that the Judge approve this settlement and let's all get back to work.

Respectfully,

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